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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE

R-5

REPLY TO: 5230 Evaluation

February 1, 1978

SUBJECT: Insect Evaluation - DR 133/77

TO: Forest Supervisor, Plumas N.F.

An increase in dying trees in the area around Deanes Valley was reported by Dick Castaldini on October 17. The area was visited by Entomologist John Pierce, accompanied by Castaldini, Norm Wycoff, John Marvin and Dick Andrews on November 3.

Several dying trees were inspected, including sugar pine, ponderosa pine and white fir. In most cases, primary bark beetles could be found in the lower bole; mountain pine beetle (Dendroctonus ponderosae) in sugar pine, western pine beetle (D. brevicomis) in ponderosa pine and fir engraver beetle (Scolytus ventralis) in white fir. Some of the white fir was also infested by the fir flatheaded borer (Melanophila drummondi) and the round headed fir borer (Tetropium abietis) and the pine frequently had the red turpentine beetle (D. valens). Most of the dying trees examined were quite large and it appears that large over-mature trees are typical of the tree mortality suffered in the area.

The observation that most dying trees in the Deanes Valley area are fully colonized by primary bark beetles suggests this is a more typical bark beetle infestation as compared to the massive tree mortality occurring on the LaPorte and Oroville Districts where drought seems mainly responsible for the tree mortality. While the trees attacked by bark beetles in Deanes Valley probably are weakened by other factors, such as drought, old age, etc., it appears the beetles are more directly responsible for the tree mortality. This line of reasoning would further suggest that suppressing the beetles would accomplish some reduction in future tree mortality which will occur if nothing is done.

The brief examination made of the area cannot adequately describe the loss. We hope to obtain additional information with aerial photos in the near future. However, we believe removing infested trees by salvage logging prior to beetle emergence early next summer would be beneficial in restricting future tree mortality to a level lower than that which will occur if nothing is done.

Also discussed during the examination was the possible need to consider normal timber management treatments to harvest over-mature trees and reduce dense stocking in some stands.

WILFRED L. FREEMAN, JR., Director
Forest Insect and Disease Management

Enclosure